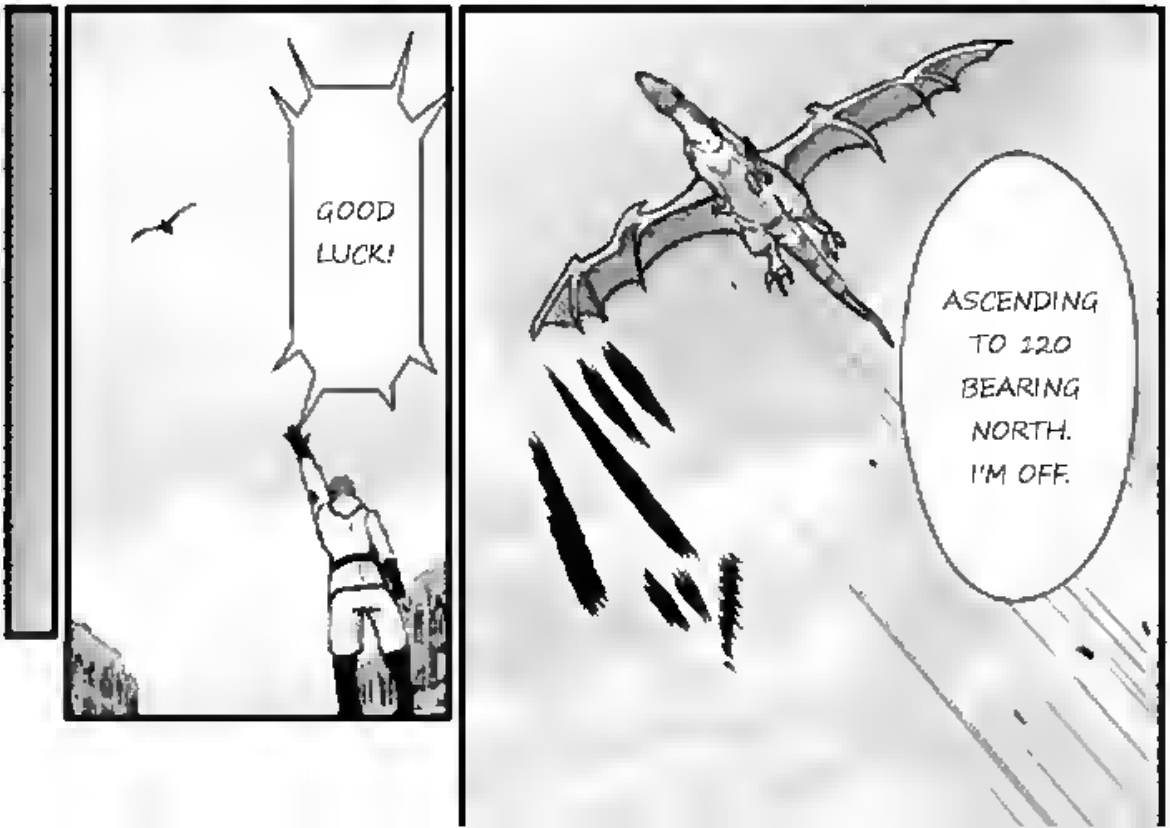
白の皇国物語 第二十四回

原作：白沢戌亥　漫画：不二まーゆ

THAT SOUNDS PRETTY GOOD, I'D LOVE TO TAKE PART IN A BATTLE LIKE THE ONE IN THE CAPITAL.
AND CARTEN HERE IS JUST FAST, MAYBE IF HE GREW BIGGER WE COULD ACTUALLY HAVE A PLACE IN BATTLE.
HA HA HA!
THAT'S TRUE.
KERL 09, PREPARE FOR TAKEOFF.
COME ON NOW, WE JUST REACHED WHERE WE ARE, IF WE'RE TAKEN DOWN NOW, IT'LL ALL BE OVER.
AND HIS HIGHNESS, THE MAN WHO ORGANIZED THAT BATTLE, IS CURRENTLY AT THE FORTRESS, SO MAYBE SOMETHING MIGHT HAPPEN!
OF COURSE.
CAREFUL OVER THERE, I'VE HEARD THERE'S A BLIZZARD UP IN THE MOUNTAINS.
OH, LOOKS LIKE IT'S TIME, I'LL BE OFF.

ROGER, KERL 09 TAKING OFF.
ASCEND TO 120 AND HEAD NORTH.
KERL 09, YOU'RE CLEARED FOR TAKEOFF. THE WIND IS COMING FROM THE NORTHEAST, AT A SPEED OF 25.

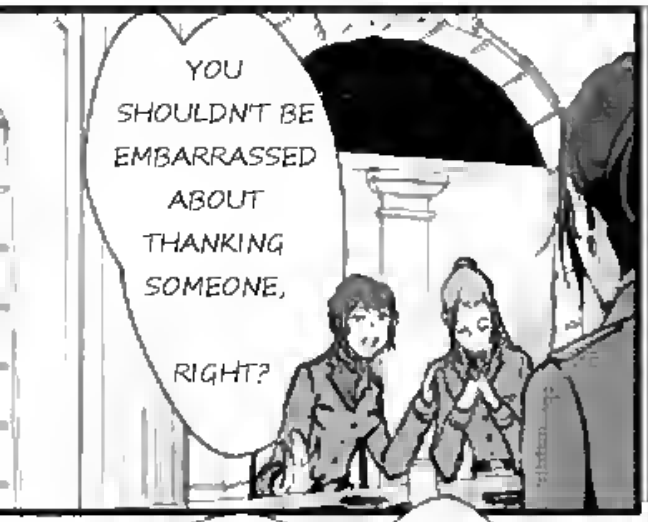

GOOD LUCK!
ASCENDING TO 120 BEARING NORTH. I'M OFF.

OH, IF IT ISN'T THE STAFF OFFICER ASSIGNED TO HIS HIGH-NESS,
DID YOU NEED SOME-THING?
WE WANTED TO HEAR HOW HIS HIGHNESS IS.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN US?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED, BUT SHE APPROACHED US HERSELF THIS TIME, USUALLY WE HAVE TO ASK HER.
I JOIN THEM OCCA-SION-ALLY.
THE MECH-ANIZED INFANTRY STAFF OFFICER WAS ALSO HERE?
HIS HIGHNESS HAS TAUGHT ME MUCH.
SO, ABOUT HIS HIGH-NESS...
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.
.....
TRY NOT TO GET CAUGHT, PRINCESS MERIELA WILL GET JEALOUS.
"TEACH-ING" YOU, EH?

UM,
HOW IS HE FEELING?
THERE'S NOTHING UNUSUAL, HE'S ACTING LIKE HE ALWAYS DOES.
ABOUT MY BRETHREN...
I'D LIKE TO ASK...
SO
I... STILL HAVEN'T THANKED HIS HIGHNESS FOR EVERYTHING.
.....

COULD YOU... UM...
TELL HIS HIGHNESS IN MY PLACE?


YOU SHOULDN'T BE EMBARRASSED ABOUT THANKING SOMEONE, RIGHT?

WHY NOT TELL HIM YOURSELF?
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WHILE HIS HIGHNESS GRANTED YOUR WISH, HE DID IT BECAUSE HE HIMSELF WANTED TO.
YOU SHOULD TELL HIM YOURSELF,
I'VE NEVER SEEN THE MECHANIZED INFANTRY STAFF OFFICER LIKE THIS BEFORE...

UH, YES...

OKAY, I'LL TELL HIM ABOUT IT.
I'LL COME SEE HIM AT 17:00.
UNDER-STOOD,
BIODOLLS NORMALLY THINK LOGICALLY AND REPRESS EMOTIONS, AND YET...
HMM...
THE FACT THAT THE EMPIRE ACTUALLY TOOK A GAMBLE WAS ODD...
STILL...
BUT WITH THE 10,000 REINFORCEMENTS, IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME.
IF WE HAD ANOTHER 50,000, WE'D BE SET.

NOT THAT TALKING ABOUT IT WILL DO ANYTHING.
FOR A WHILE NOW I'VE BEEN FEELING LIKE I'M BEING WATCHING...
.....
DO YOU HAVE A MOMENT?
YOUR HIGH-NESS,
AH, THE ESTIMATES HERE ARE OFF!
.....

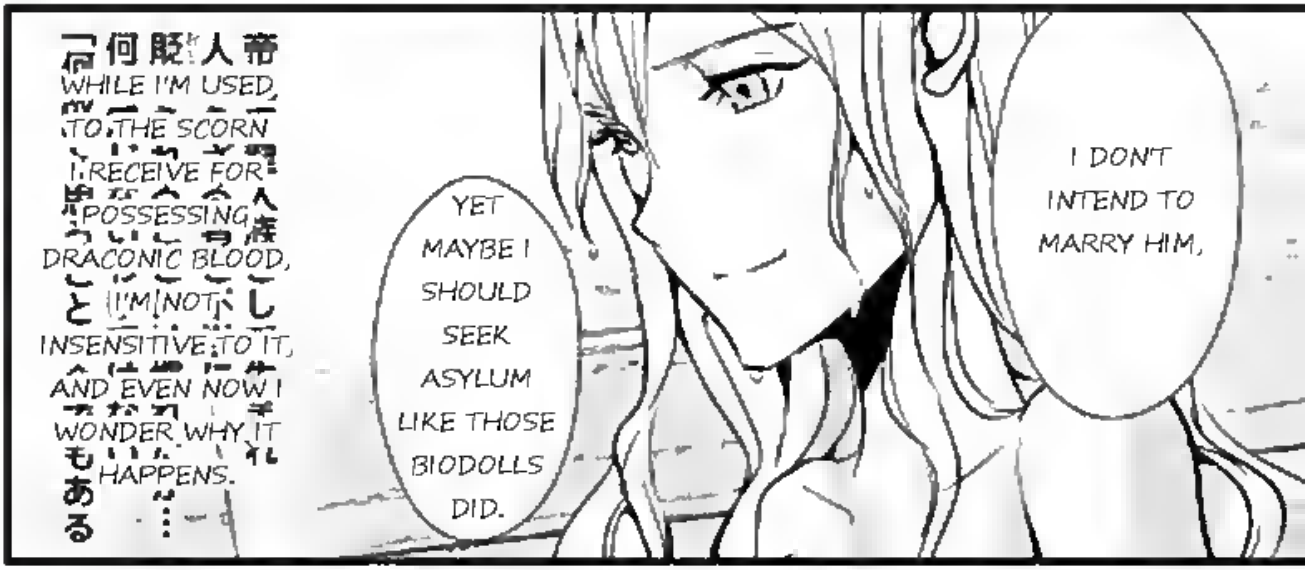
NO, SHE WANTS TO EXPRESS HER GRATITUDE FOR THE RECENT BATTLE.
THE MECHANIZED INFANTRY STAFF OFFICER WANTS TO MEET YOU AT 17:00.
DID SOME-THING COME UP?
WHAT IS IT?
DO YOU PERHAPS HATE ME?
YES, YOUR HIGH-NESS?
MORE PAPERS
CAP-TAIN,
H-HOW CONSCIEN-TIOUS OF HER.
THANK YOU FOR TELLING ME ABOUT THE MEETING.
AND THESE.
NO, NOT AT ALL.
EXCUSE ME.

NO, IT'S FINE.
I COULD RETURN SOME OTHER TIME IF YOU'RE BUSY.
RIGHT.
SO, WHAT WAS IT YOU WANTED TO TALK ABOUT?
I SIMPLY FULFILLED MY DUTY,
I INTEND TO WORK HARD TO BE OF USE TO YOU, YOUR HIGHNESS.
I CANNOT FIND THE WORDS TO PROPERLY CONVEY MY GRATITUDE FOR YOU SAVING MY BRETHREN.
JUST LIKE YOU.
WHAT IS THIS?

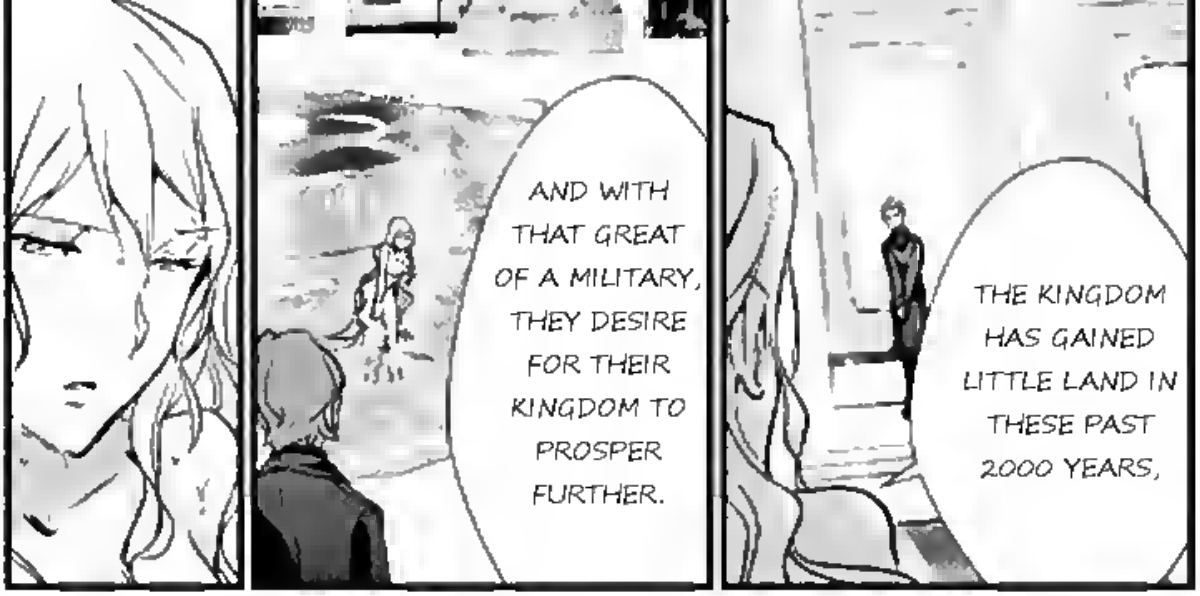
THE EMPIRE REQUESTED THAT WE RETURN THEIR "EQUIPMENT", BUT NO SUCH OBJECTS EXIST IN OUR COUNTRY.
FORMS FOR APPLYING FOR ASYLUM.
WE INTEND TO TREAT THEM AS REFUGEES IF THEY GIVE US THEIR CONSENT.
YES SIR!
I'LL BE NEEDING THEIR SIGNATURES ON THOSE FORMS.
YOUR HIGH-NESS...
AND SINCE YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO'S COME FORTH TO TAKE CARE OF THEM, I WENT AHEAD AND APPROVED IT.

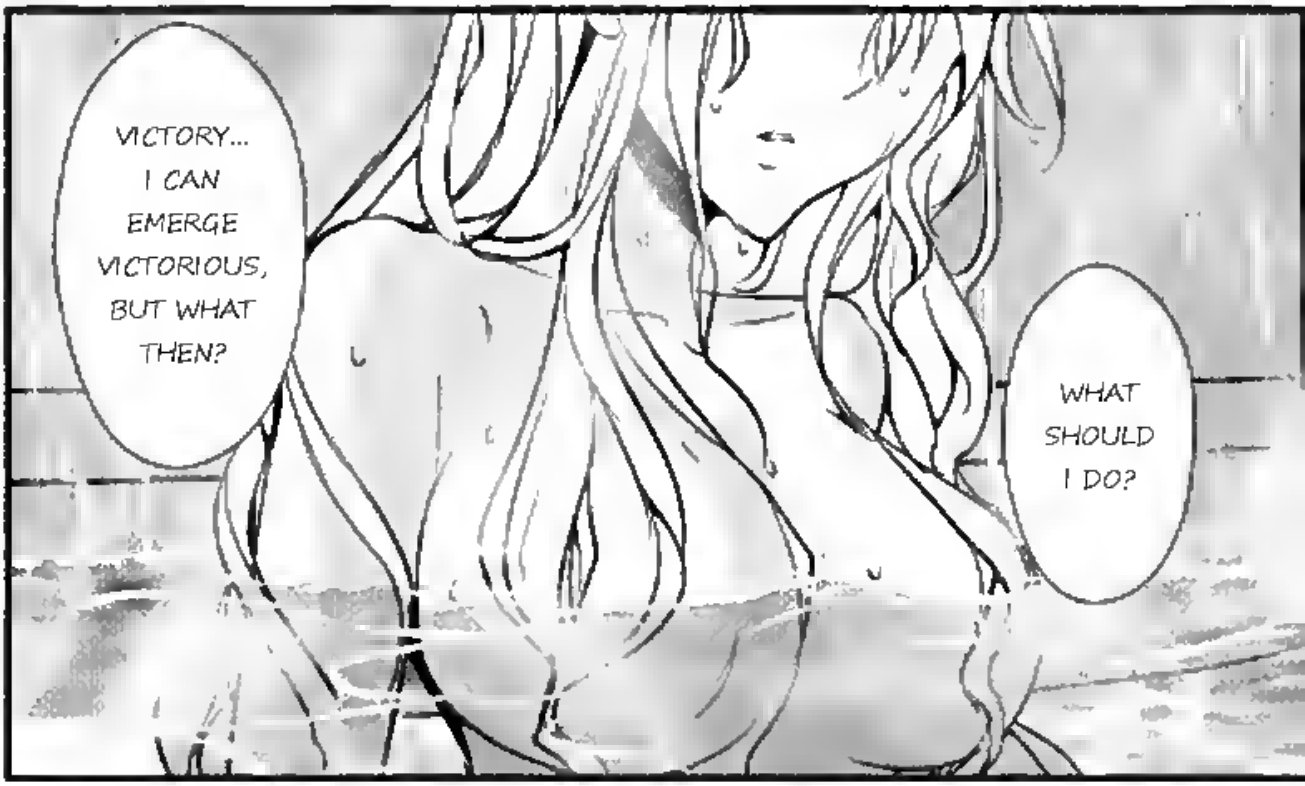
PRIN-
CESS.
HOW BORING. IT'S ALL JUST STANDARD MILITARY OPERATIONS.
THERE WAS NOTHING UNUSUAL IN THE KINGDOM'S TACTICS.
I KNOW.
AND I REALIZE THAT EACH OF THOSE SKINS CAN DECIDE THE OUTCOME OF A BATTLE.
OUR SOLDIERS ARE STRIPPING AWAY WIRES AND SKINS FROM THE TRENCHES EVERY DAY.
GRAND-
MOTHER.
SO FIGHTING THE "WHITE" HAS CAUSED THE PRINCESS TO CHANGE...
I ALSO REALIZE THAT EVEN MY DRACONIC BLOOD ISN'T ALL THAT SIGNIFICANT ON A BATTLE-FIELD.

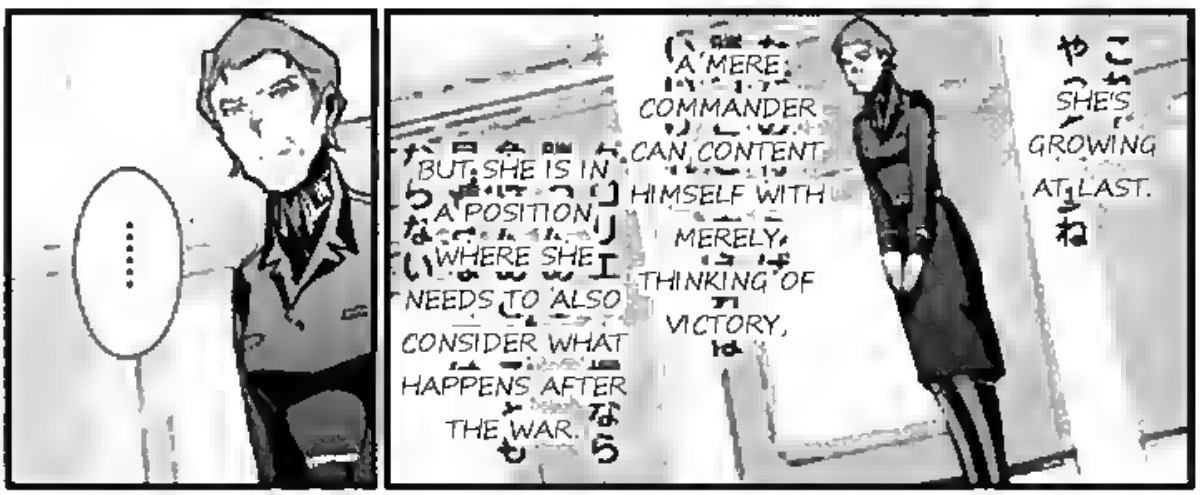
WHY AM I A PRINCESS?
I SPILL ALL THIS BLOOD JUST TO MEET THE MAN I'M INTERESTED IN.


I DON'T INTEND TO MARRY HIM,
YET MAYBE I SHOULD SEEK ASYLUM LIKE THOSE BIODOLLS DID.
「何度人帝
WHILE I'M USED TO THE SCORN I RECEIVE FOR POSSESSING DRACONIC BLOOD, I'M NOT INSENSITIVE TO IT, AND EVEN NOW I WONDER WHY IT HAPPENS.
もある
…

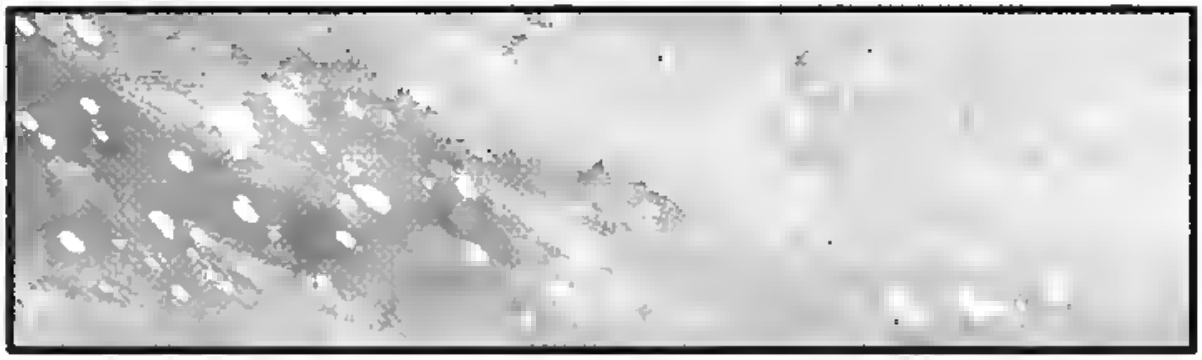
IF WE DEFEATED THE KINGDOM HERE AND GAINED NEW LANDS, JUST WHAT SORT OF FUTURE WOULD OUR COUNTRY GRASP?
THE EMPIRE ONLY KNOWS HOW TO INTIMIDATE OTHER NATIONS AND OPPRESS ITS OWN PEOPLE.
THE KINGDOM THRIVES BECAUSE IT POSSESSES A WEALTH OF RESOURCES AND THE MEANS OF EXPLOITING THEM.
PRIOR TO MEETING HIM, I HADN'T EVER THOUGHT OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF MY ACTIONS.
YES,
GRANDMOTHER, ARE THERE OTHER COUNTRIES BEYOND OUR CONTINENT THAT ARE STRONGER THAN US?
I'M NOT SAYING THE KINGDOM IS CORRECT, EVEN HE KNOWS THAT HIS COUNTRY MAY ONE DAY PURSUE THE SAME PATH OUR EMPIRE HAS TAKEN.
PERHAPS IT'S ABSURD FOR US TO LATCH ONTO THE TITLE OF "STRONGEST ON THE CONTINENT".
THERE ARE 3 COUNTRIES THAT COULD OPPOSE OUR ENTIRE CONTINENTIS COMBINED STRENGTH, AND IF IT'S JUST OUR EMPIRE ALONE, THERE ARE MORE THAN YOU HAVE FINGERS AND TOES.


THE KINGDOM HAS GAINED LITTLE LAND IN THESE PAST 2000 YEARS,
AND WITH THAT GREAT OF A MILITARY, THEY DESIRE FOR THEIR KINGDOM TO PROSPER FURTHER.


VICTORY... I CAN EMERGE VICTORIOUS, BUT WHAT THEN?
WHAT SHOULD I DO?


.....
BUT SHE IS IN A POSITION WHERE SHE NEEDS TO ALSO CONSIDER WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE WAR.
A MERE COMMANDER CAN CONTENT HIMSELF WITH MERELY THINKING OF VICTORY,
SHE'S GROWING AT LAST.

I'VE COME WITH A REPORT!
ENTER.
THE 4TH FRONT HAS INITIATED COMBAT AS PLANNED DESPITE THE BLIZZARD.
I WONDER WHAT LECTIVAL IS DOING...
HE POSSESSES GREAT POWER, COMMANDS A GREAT ARMY, AND FACES A GREAT FOE.
YES MA'AM.
A BLIZ-ZARD...
TELL THE DIVISION COMMANDER TO BE MORE DILIGENT.
WE ARE BOTH FATED TO LIVE AND DIE WITH OUR COUNTRIES...



UGH, KNOWING YOUR DIRECTION MAKES LITTLE DIFFERENCE WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW YOUR POSITION.

IT SURE IS COLD.

I'LL HAVE TO ASK ONE OF MY SENIORS TO TEACH ME WHEN I GET BACK
THOUGH I'LL HAVE TO RETURN SAFELY FIRST...
SHIT, AM I STILL NOT GOOD AT ISOLATING THE TEMPERATURE?
IT'S JUST A LITTLE FUTHER, PAL, YOU CAN DO IT.
AT MY CURRENT LEVEL, CAN I EVEN GO THAT HIGH?
WHAT IS IT LIKE UP THERE?
I WONDER IF IT'S CLEAR ABOVE THE CLOUDS.

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WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF WE FELL HERE? I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING BELOW US, BUT WE SHOULD BE NEAR THE SIRIUS OR WHITE WOLF MOUNTAIN RANGE.
な…！
で力尽き
THIS REALLY ISN'T GOOD.
AND CARTEN'S AT HIS LIMIT.
体力も

THIS IS THE ICE WOLVES' TERRITORY, は
I'VE HEARD WE HAVE A DEAL FOR THEM TO SAVE PEOPLE WHO GET STRANDED, 人命救助の
BUT THAT'S FOR THOSE WHO HAVE PERMISSION TO ENTER. 許可が
I'M COUNTING ON YOU,
GETTING TORN APART BY THE ICE WOLVES DOESN'T SOUND FUN.
OH?

SEARCH-LIGHTS?
WE DID IT! WE'VE REACHED PARATEON!
WAIT...
軍事
民間
THOSE ARE CIVILIAN FACILITIES.

THIS ISN'T PARATEON!

今までの時間、飛んでいたで——
なんやこの街は
JUST WHAT IS THIS CITY HERE?

到達できる北の場所はパラオンにまで…
AH!

ヴァーミットに戻ってきた？
いや、建物の様子が違う…
DID I RETURN TO VARMITT? NO, THE BUILDINGS ARE DIFFERENT...
方角は常に北を向いていたはずだな
SHOULD'VE BEEN HEADED NORTH THE ENTIRE TIME...
SO THEN...

SHIT!
I FLEW PAST PARATEON AND INTO IMPERIAL TERRITORY!

IS THIS...
WILMAGS!
THE CORNERSTONE OF THE ANTI-KINGDOM FRONT!

W-
これは何だ？
WHAT IS T-THAT-?